

027.7

Zeitschrift
für
Bibliothekskulturjournal homepage: <http://www.0277.ch>

The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL): twenty years of promoting Europe's cultural heritage in print and manuscript

Ingeborg Versprille, Marian Lefferts, Cristina Dondi



CONSORTIUM OF
EUROPEAN
RESEARCH
LIBRARIES

Abstract

The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL, <http://www.cerl.org>) is a membership organisation, involving an active community of c. 190 libraries each with a keen focus on cultural heritage in the form of early printed books and manuscripts. Collaboratively, CERL member libraries and researchers in the field develop products and services. These include the HPB, the CERL Thesaurus, MEI and the CERL Portal. This article comprises a description of CERL's strategy, activities and ways to contribute.

1 General information about the Consortium of European Research Libraries

The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) is a membership organisation for all libraries, museums of the book, archives and other organisations with an interest in cultural heritage in the form of early printed books and manuscripts. It had as its first objective to bring together all information on books printed in Europe during the

hand-press period (c. 1450 - c. 1830) in the Heritage of the Printed Book Database (then the Hand Press Book Database (HPB)): CERL was one of the pioneers using web-based interfaces to make integrated bibliographical sources available to researchers. CERL is an active community of more than 190 libraries with holdings of early printed and manuscript material. In close relationship with the community of scholars and researchers in the field of the European printed and written heri-

tage, CERL has, since its foundation, provided services for both its member libraries and the scholarly community.¹ All of CERL's products and services are created as a joint effort of special collections libraries across Europe and North-America.² A more detailed outline of CERL's products and services as well as ways to contribute to them can be found in the next paragraphs.

1.1 CERL as an organisation

On the initiative of leading research libraries in Europe, the Consortium of European Research Libraries was founded in 1994 as a company 'limited by guarantee, not having a share capital' under English law. The Board of Directors is the decision making body of CERL as a company under English law. The Board is responsible for the Annual Report and employs the Company Secretary and the Executive Manager. It oversees the work of the Secretariat, or Management Team, and takes decisions in financial and strategic matters. The Management Team, consisting of a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, together with the Executive Manager, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Consortium.

The Coordinating Committee is a representative body delegated by Members. It assists the Management Team in drawing up policies and plans of action, and monitors their implementation. The Committee coordinates and participates in the work of the several Working Groups and is given a role also in monitoring EU-funded projects in which CERL takes part (see paragraph 2, below). Each Working Group is chaired by a member of the Coordinating Committee.³

1.2 Membership of CERL

Membership in CERL is open to libraries, archives, museums and research institutions worldwide but with a scope on the cultural heritage of Europe.

Application of membership is decided on by the Board of Directors.⁴

CERL has the following categories of Members:

Single Members: paying the full annual fee and having one vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Bodleian Library of Oxford, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, British Library, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (the National Library of the Netherlands), and the Universitätsbibliothek/Zentralbibliothek of Bern are among the single members of CERL.

Special Members: due to size, specialisation or other special reasons, paying a reduced annual fee and having one vote at the AGM. Recently, The National Library of Latvia, The Institut de l'information scientifique et technique (INIST), Nancy, France and The Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura (BEIC) Foundation, Milan, became special members of CERL.

Group Members: two or more libraries sharing the full annual fee and having together one vote at the AGM. To pay one annual fee, the Group cannot be larger than 16 members. In 2013-2014, Groups from Ireland, Scotland, London, and Switzerland joined groups from Italy, Poland, Estonia and Flanders which had joined before.⁵

Cluster library Members: Single Members may, with the consent of the Board of Directors, invite libraries, with which they co-operate, to be cluster libraries. Cluster library Members have no voting right at the AGM. ABES in France and the National Széchényi Library in Budapest, for example, have each brought in large Cluster groups.

¹A list of CERL members can be found at http://www.cerl.org/web/en/membership/list_members (as of: 02/06/2014).

²<http://www.cerl.org/about/development> (as of: 02/06/2014). (About CERL's Strategic Plan 2012-2015).

³More information about the Working Groups is available on <http://www.cerl.org/collaboration/main> (as of: 02/06/2014).

⁴http://www.cerl.org/about/legal_documents (as of: 02/06/2014). (CERL's Rules and Regulations).

⁵<http://www.cerl.org/intern/ec/main> (as of: 02/06/2014). (Secretary's Report Meeting Coordinating Committee 2014, members-only).

1.3 Products and services provided by CERL

CERL aims to provide integrated access to data on materials for the study of the history of the book that is held by research libraries all over Europe and the US. Over the years, it has developed a rich array of databases and services, which are each de-

scribed below.

Heritage of the Printed Book Database (HPB)

The Heritage of the Printed Book Database (HPB) offers scholars in all disciplines access to nearly 5 million items of European printed heritage, from its earliest beginnings (c. 1455) to around 1830.⁶

[IPN] Imprint Name

Keyword index for persons and institutions related to the physical production and distribution of the book, consisting of name forms in access point form if accompanied by a relevant relator code (this part is a keyword indexed subset of the general person / corporate body indexes [PER] and [COR]) and additionally the original imprint phrasing as on the item. Search for example:
ipn elsevier d?

[FPK] Fingerprint (Keyword) and [FPS] Fingerprint (String)

Fingerprints or fingerprint fragments are retrievable from these two indexes. Search for example:
fps 4.n- ledi?

[FMO] Former Owner (Person), [FOC] Former Owner (Corporate Body) and [PRN] Provenance Names

[FMO] and [FOC] are subsets of the regular person and corporate body indexes [PER] and [COR] with the same indexing (i.e. persons are searched by surname, first name), but limited to persons and corporate bodies identified to have a provenance role to the described work. Only entities catalogued in access point form will be found. The [PRN] index is a keyword index, combining the provenance-related free text note elements and the access point name forms with relevant relator codes. Search for example:

foc bayerische staatsbibliothek
fmo Magyary-Kossa, Sámuel

prn motto nisi dominus frustra
prn (exlibris or "ex libris") and Esterhazy

[CID] HPB ID

This index is used to retrieve records by their HPB ID, e.g.



HPB Identifier: DE-604.VK.BV001645308
Cataloguing Source: Bavarian State Library (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München)

cid de-604.vk.bv001645308
HPB IDs can also be truncated by appending "?"

[CSO] Cataloguing Source

This index can be used to select all records from one source. The ISIL/MARC21/CERL defined code needs to be known. Search for example:
cso czprnk to retrieve all records of the National Library of the Czech Republic. To perform the same search without having to know the code, look at the second tab of the HPB start page.

[HLD] Holdings

Information specifying the location of an item can be searched here, for example shelfmarks or sublocations:

hld 2011? hld Magdalen and cso GB-UkOxU (retrieves all books from Magdalen College, Oxford University)

[DIM] Dimensions

The data is too heterogeneous to offer a reliable limit option, but a free text index (on the content of MARC21 300 \$c Dimensions) is available. Search for example:

dim (quart* or 4o or 4to or "4 o" or "4 to")

Table 1: HPB Special Indexes explained

⁶The HPB is available to CERL members, at <http://hpb.cerl.org> (as of: 02/06/2014); please contact Marian.Lefferts@cerl.org, to request a free trial period, or secretariat@cerl.org to become a CERL member.

The HPB Database brings together catalogue records from research libraries in Eastern and Western Europe and North America (currently it includes records from over 200 libraries, contributed by 41 institutions). Its broad coverage and good retrieval possibilities make it an essential tool for systematic research on European early printed material. The database is continually enriched with new and/or improved datasets. Together, the interface and indexing are specifically tailored to the specialist nature of the bibliographical records held in the HPB.

In addition to commonly occurring indexes, such as author, title and date, the HPB offers specialist indexes such as for the bibliographical format, provenance information, imprint names, finger-

prints and bibliographic citations. Existing indexes can easily be adapted or refined, and new indexes can be added (see Table 1).

As the HPB is made up from records created in different cataloguing traditions in many European languages, there are large numbers of variant forms of names of printers, authors, and place names. To improve search and retrieval, the CERL Thesaurus (see below) is connected to the HPB search interface (when you use the *[PER] Person/Author*, *[PLC] Place Name*, or *[IPN] Imprint Name* indexes). A search using one variant form can be repeated to include all variant forms recorded in the CERL Thesaurus, thereby greatly enhancing the results set as well as the quality and completeness of the research.

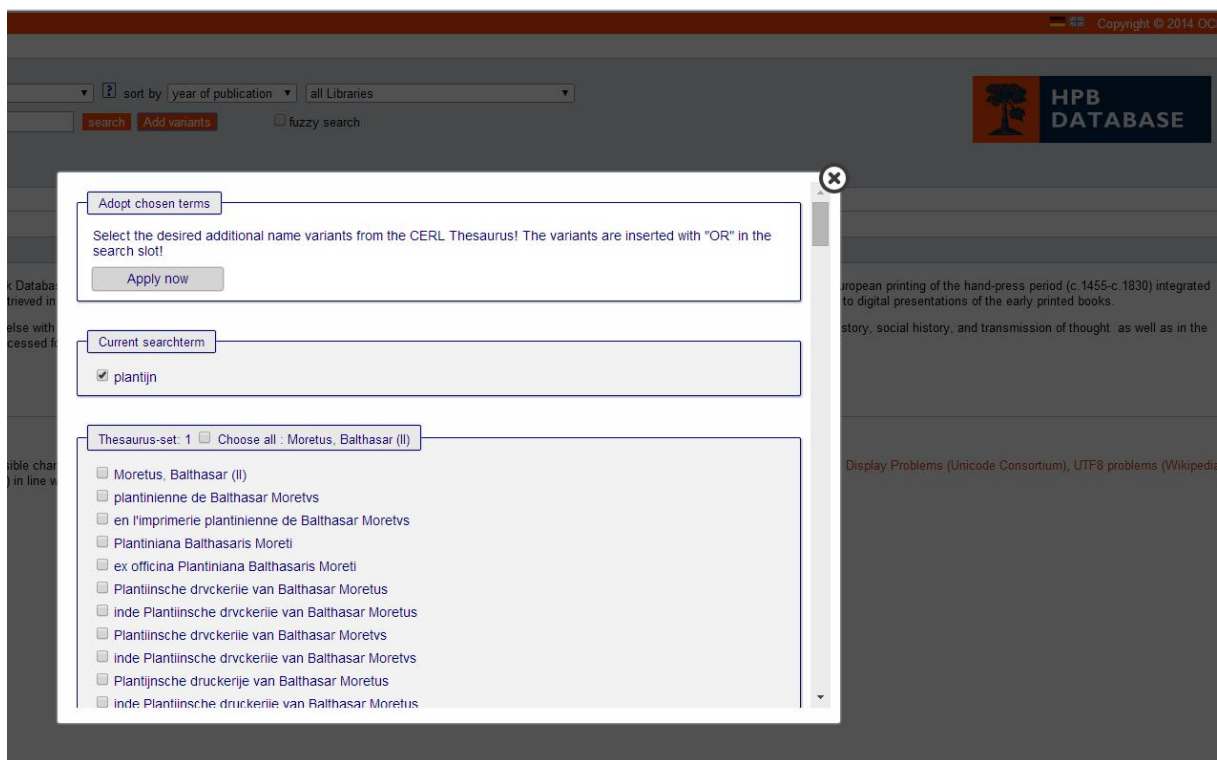


Figure 1: Variant form search

Contributions to the HPB welcome

CERL invites libraries and institutions to help enrich the HPB Database by contributing biblio-

graphic records. CERL will accept data in MARC/UTF-8.⁷ Please contact the CERL Executive Manager at Marian.Lefferts@cerl.org.

⁷Leaflet Heritage of the Printed Book Database: assessing the record of Europe's book heritage / CERL, March 2012.

CERL Thesaurus

The CERL Thesaurus was developed to address the particularly European issue of variant forms of place names and personal names in the period of hand press printing, by bringing together variant spellings, forms in Latin and other languages, and fictitious names. This unique resource combines authority information used in libraries and other cultural heritage institutions, for example the German dataset formerly known as the Personen-namendatei (PND), the Italian EDIT16, and the authority file of the Short Title Catalogue Netherlands.⁸ In the CERL Thesaurus identical entities are mapped and related ones are linked.⁹

To date, records from more than 70 authority files from CERL member libraries and other projects concentrating on the history of the book have been brought together and made searchable in one single system, and the CERL Thesaurus is still being added to. The CERL Thesaurus gives access to over 900,000 records of authors, translators, editors, artists, etc. that have been involved in the intellectual production of books, identified through more than 2,000,000 different name forms and almost 20,000 records of institutions with 40,000 different name forms.

Provenance Research in the CERL Thesaurus

The CERL Thesaurus includes over 20,000 records of persons and institutions linking out to library catalogues where books are recorded that once belonged to them. This number of records increases as further provenance indexes and authority files are integrated into the CT. Currently the CT links out to more than 20 external bibliographic sources, such as the Index of Provenance of BSB-Ink (the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Inkunabel Katalog, 1988-), or the provenance authority Index of the National Central Library of Rome. Furthermore, all provenance evidence gathered in the Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI) database is automatically fed into the CT, in this way contributing in real time to the reconstruction of dispersed collections which is one of the main goals of the CT database. While it is clear that this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the reconstruction of dispersed collections, we believe that the CT is the perfect environment in which to bring together provenance records, and to link out to wherever the surviving books, once part to that provenance, are today. As such, it is an essential research tool for scholars and researchers in this field.

Collegio dei Santi Biagio e Carlo ai Catinari, Biblioteca <Roma>

Record Identifier	cnc00011728
Headings	Collegio dei Santi Biagio e Carlo ai Catinari, Biblioteca <Roma> [IT-RM0267] Collegium Ss. Blasii et Caroli (Roma) [SpMaUC]
General Notes	[Chierici Regolari della Congregazione di San Paolo] O Barnabiti. A Roma nel 1575 ebbero la chiesa di San Biagio dell'Anello o de Oliva, nel 1596 istituirono un Collegio e una cappella intitolati a San Paolo Apostolo (Collegio di San Paolo alla Colonna). Nel 1612 fondarono un Collegio e la Chiesa di San Carlo al Corso o ai catinari, poi Santi Biagio e Carlo. [Libreria di S. Carlo a Catinari] Nota manoscritta con croce con ai lati P A (Paulus Apostolus) proprio dei barnabiti o Chierici regolari di San Paolo, ordine del convento.
Place of Activity	Roma
Permanent Link	http://thesaurus.cerl.org/record/cnc00011728 Last Change: 2012-03-16

Annotations

There are no annotations to this record.
→ Add an annotation

Provenance Information

Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma
Provenance Information

Biblioteca Complutense, Madrid
Provenance Information

1 related records

sort alphabetically | sort chronologically

Bonsi, Lelio (1532-1599)

Figure 2: Excerpt from a CERL Thesaurus record (Collegio dei santi Biagio e Carlo ai Catinari)

⁸<http://www.kb.nl/en/expertise/for-libraries/short-title-catalogue-netherlands> (as of: 02/06/2014).

⁹The CERL Thesaurus is freely available at <http://thesaurus.cerl.org> (as of: 02/06/2014). For more information about the

CERL Thesaurus see http://www.cerl.org/web/en/resources/cerl_thesaurus/main (as of: 02/06/2014).

A sample record

CT record for Collegio dei santi Biagio e Carlo ai Catinari, Biblioteca <Roma> (CT no.: cnc00011728) links out to entries in the catalogue of the National Library of Rome (where some 830 books can still be found today), and in the catalogue of the Complutense University Library of Madrid (where only one book can be found today, for reasons which will be interesting to investigate). The entry also links out to one 'related record': Lelio Bonsi, who owned the Complutense book, probably before it entered the library of the Collegio (see Figure 2).

Over time, the CERL Thesaurus has been enriched by linking to a rich variety of relevant databases, containing for example, information on printer's devices (such as digitised copies of McKerrow, Vindel and those recorded in ICCU's

SBN(A)¹⁰, the watermarks found in paper used for printed books (through the Bernstein project)¹¹, the exact location of printers' places (through GeoNames)¹², and biographical information (through VIAF¹³). Linking from the CERL Thesaurus to the Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke recently published by the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin¹⁴ is planned.

CERL Portal

The CERL Portal for Manuscripts and Early Printed Materials¹⁵ enables scholars to search across the contents of online manuscript databases, in combination with selected large databases of printed materials, thereby overcoming the historical differentiation of printed books and manuscripts in libraries.

Manuscripts, Archives, and Letters – Records covering all periods

National Library of Portugal
Nuova Biblioteca Manoscritta (mss. in Italian libraries)
CALAMES, Union catalogue of mss. in French Academic libraries
MANUS (mss. in Italian Libraries)
Ghent University Library, Belgium
Royal Library, Denmark*
GVK, Union catalogue of GBV network (Germany)*
National Library of Scotland*

Manuscripts, Archives, and Letters – Medieval only

BSB Munich: Digitised manuscripts
Digital Scriptorium, USA
Manuscriptorium (mss.): Eastern European (and other) countries
Mediaeval Latin mss. in Lund UL, Sweden
MMDC, Medieval Mss. in Dutch Collections

Manuscripts, Archives, and Letters – Modern only

National Library of Australia
Waller Collection, Uppsala UL, Sweden
EDIFFAH, Archival deposits in Swedish libraries
KALLIOPE, uniting the holdings of ca. 500 collections (Germany)*
KALLIAS, DLA (Germany)*

Early printed material – Union Catalogues & National Bibliographies

Manuscriptorium (printed material): Eastern European (and other) countries
VD17, German National bibliography 1601-1700*
ESTC, English Short Title Catalogue 1473-1800*
EROMM, European Register of Microform and digital Masters*
HPB (CERL), Heritage of the Printed Book (including ISTC, SBN(A), STCN, VD16 etc.)*
CCPB, Uniting printed heritage material of Spain (to 1900, incl. mss.)*

*Remote systems (z39.50), which will time-out if too many variant forms are added

Table 2: Databases that are currently accessible through the CERL Portal

¹⁰http://www.cerl.org/resources/links_to_other_resources/bibliographical_data#printers_devices (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹¹http://www.cerl.org/resources/links_to_other_resources/bibliographical_data#watermarks (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹²<http://www.geonames.org> (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹³<http://viaf.org/> (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹⁴<http://tw.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/> (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹⁵<http://cerl.epc.ub.uu.se/sportal/> (as of: 02/06/2014).

The CERL Portal provides access to distributed databases containing manuscripts materials, printed works, photographic materials, letters and other special materials. The focus lies on manuscript materials, but databases with bibliographic descriptions of early printed books, such as the Heritage of the Printed Book Database (HPB) and the English Short-Title Catalogue can be included in the search as well (see Table 2).

As with the HPB Database, search and retrieval is supported by the CERL Thesaurus. Databases that are included in the CERL Portal are either 'harvested', i.e. the records have been collected from its original database and stored in an integrated, local index (OAI-PMH), or are accessed through a live connection (via Z39.50). Further contributions to the CERL Portal are welcomed.

Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI)

Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI)¹⁶ is a database specifically designed to record and search the material evidence (or copy specific, post-production evidence and provenance information) of 15th-century printed books: ownership, decoration, binding, manuscript annotations, stamps, prices, etc. MEI is linked to the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC), provided by the British Library¹⁷, from which it derives the bibliographical records, and it uniquely allows the user to combine searches of bibliographical records (extracted from ISTC) with copy specific records. Its first creation was funded by the British Academy, and further development (in the 15cBOOKTRADE project) is funded by a five-year ERC grant recently awarded to Dr Cristina Dondi. MEI is hosted by CERL, and freely available on its website.¹⁸ MEI Records can

be downloaded in MARC21 or UNIMARC Holdings format for integration into local OPACs.

Over 50 editors in as many institutions (ranging from very small to very large) across Europe and North America are currently recording provenance in MEI, thereby contributing to the reconstruction of dispersed collections. All MEI provenance records are fed into the CERL Thesaurus, which acts as the database's authority file for names of former owners. All libraries with incunabula holdings are encouraged to integrate their copy-specific information in MEI. For more information please contact Dr Cristina Dondi at c.dondi@cerl.org.

Can You Help? – Identifying Provenance Evidence

CERL has developed a resource for public discussion and identification of provenance queries. Queries entered in the provenance information section will be answered by an extensive network of specialists, thus enabling the sharing of knowledge and expertise.¹⁹ Former owners thus identified are subsequently added to the CERL Thesaurus (see Figure 3).

Following the rise of the history of the book in the 1980s and 1990s, provenance studies have become an important component in the work of social and cultural historians dealing with questions of readership and literacy, collection formation and dispersal. The ownership of books by craftsmen and women is now as significant as that of kings and archbishops. At the same time, a separate development of concern about the security of library collections has widened interest in recording provenances of all sorts, ancient and modern. In recognition of this trend, CERL has created the 'Provenance Information' section on its website.²⁰

¹⁶<http://www.cerl.org/resources/mei/main> (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹⁷<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/istc/> (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹⁸<http://incunabula.cerl.org/cgi-bin/search.pl?lang=en> (as of: 02/06/2014).

¹⁹Leaflet Heritage CERL at a glance: assessing the record of European's book heritage / CERL, August 2013.

²⁰<http://www.cerl.org/resources/provenance/main> (as of: 02/06/2014).

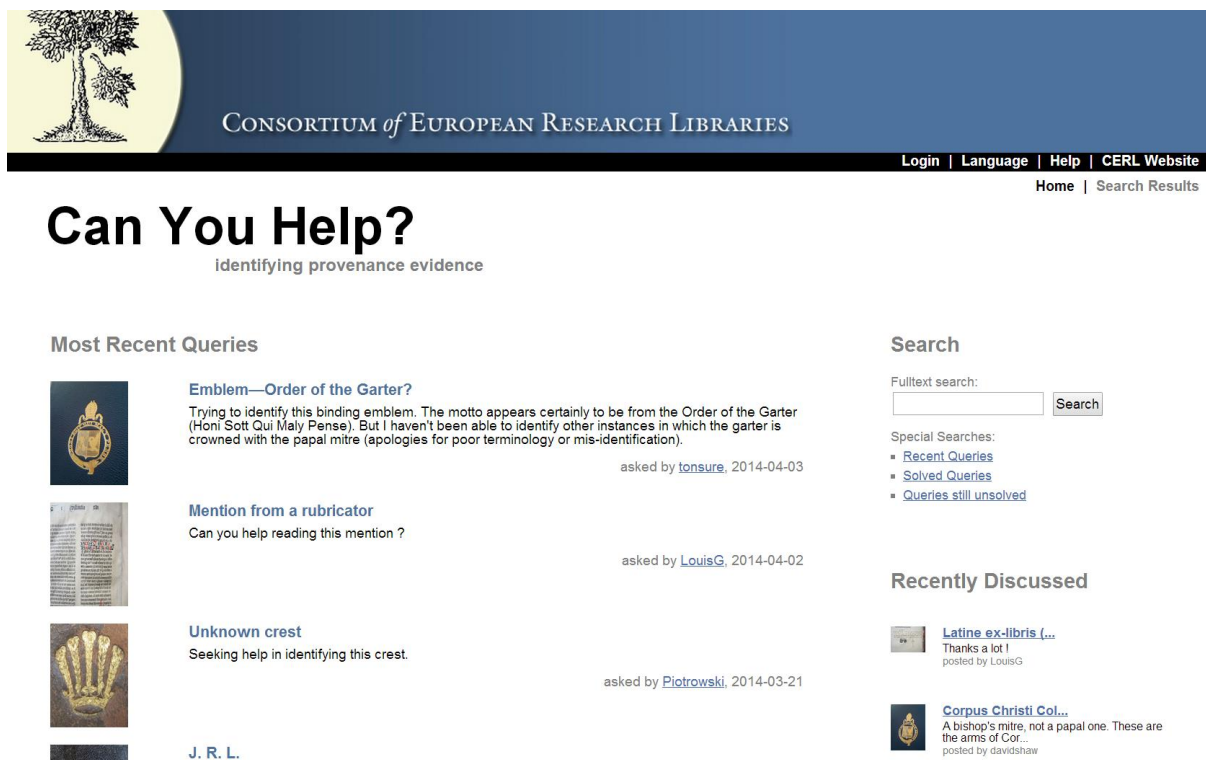


Figure 3: CERL's resource for public discussion and identification of provenance queries

2 CERL as an active community sharing knowledge and expertise

Members meet at two official meetings organised by CERL, typically hosted by one of its member institutions. One is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which approves the budget for the coming year, elects members to the Board and Committee and hears reports by the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Working Groups. The other occasion is at the annual meeting of the Coordinating Committee. Besides these official meetings, CERL regularly organises seminars and training workshop on themes related to CERL's remit. A special seminar with invited speakers addressing subjects related to CERL's objectives is organised each year.²¹ Furthermore, CERL represents her members by participating in conferences in the academic and library worlds.²²

²¹The theme for the 2014 seminar (Oslo, 28 October 2014) is 'The application of text encoding facilities to digital versions of European early books'; details of events are available at <http://www.cerl.org/services/seminars/main> (as of: 02/06/2014).

CERL aims to provide a network for the creation of products and services (see above) and to support the exchange of expertise by facilitating several special interest groups. The members of CERL interact (both virtually and in person) by collaborating in the working groups and special interest groups:

The *Expert Group for Manuscripts Librarians* aims to act as a forum for curatorial concerns, and aims to enhance the understanding and practical cooperation among manuscript curators across Europe, and their dialogue with scholarship groups such as APICES (Association Paléographique Internationale).²³

The *CERL Security Network* aims to support libraries and institutions in protecting their collections against theft and criminal damage by coordinat-

²²<http://www.cerl.org/services/main> (as of: 02/06/2014).

²³<http://liber-manuscripts.kb.nl/> (as of: 02/06/2014). Their 6th conference for Manuscript Librarians, 'Digital and Traditional Manuscripts: Managing a Great Migration' is planned for Copenhagen, 9-11 Oct. 2014.

ing information about security issues. The Security Network organises events for information exchange and provides guidance on building collection security policy.²⁴

CERL's Binding Working Group wishes to foster collaboration between book binding projects, and encourage the use of standards across these projects. It would be desirable to achieve a common access point for information about book bindings, and CERL would wish to play a role in achieving this goal.²⁵

The *Provenance Working Group* aims to bring together libraries and institutions involved in projects relating to the production of, and access to, records with provenance information, and their integration.²⁶

The *LIBER Forum for Digital Cultural Heritage* (previously the LIBER Steering Committee for Heritage Collections and Preservation) is co-ordinated with CERL. The Forum focuses on making cultural heritage meaningful for today's online research environment and for the general public. The Forum aims to discuss topics such as digitisation of originals, structured digital descriptions, 'born digital' materials as the cultural heritage of tomorrow, digital cultural heritage as primary research data for cooperative research, skill development etc. Also, the Forum serves as an exchange space for best practices and ideas, to encourage each practitioner in their daily concerns, and finally to support each other in common approaches, to develop vibrant networks, and meaningful collaboration.²⁷

3 CERL as a partner in EU-funded projects

CERL is involved as a partner in some European projects. As well as being examples of best practice they bring benefits to the CERL membership in the large degree of collaboration with other institutions that is involved.

The *CENDARI* project²⁸ aims to integrate digital archives and resources for research on medieval and modern European history. Selected resources – including those from hitherto isolated archives and data silos – will be made available to researchers of medieval Europe and First World War period. Harnessing cutting-edge technologies, the CENDARI project intends to produce a powerful platform providing scholars with online access to physically dispersed historical information.

The *Europeana Cloud* project²⁹ aims to develop a cloud-based infrastructure for the network of Europeana, its content providers and its aggregators in which to store data, with a clear understanding of the legal, strategic and economic issues involved, presented in combination with Europeana Research³⁰, set of tools and services specifically for the academic researcher.

And, as mentioned above, the 15cBOOKTRADE project to enhance MEI, which began in 2014.³¹

Figure 4³² shows an overview of many of CERL's activities and services, and their users:

²⁴<http://www.cerl.org/collaboration/security> (as of: 02/06/2014).

²⁵<http://www.cerl.org/collaboration/work/binding/main> (as of: 02/06/2014).

²⁶<http://www.cerl.org/collaboration/work/provenance/main> (as of: 02/06/2014).

²⁷<http://www.cerl.org/collaboration/liberwg> (as of: 02/06/2014). Together with the LIBER Forum of Digital Cultural Heritage, CERL, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands, the University of Vienna, and Leiden University Library, organised the 3rd LIBER workshop on Digital Curation, 'Approaches to preserving born-digital materials' (Vienna, 19-20 May 2014).

For more information see <https://liber2014.univie.ac.at/> (as of: 02/06/2014).

²⁸<http://www.cendari.eu> (as of: 02/06/2014).

²⁹<http://pro.europeana.eu/web/europeana-cloud> (as of: 02/06/2014).

³⁰See also this presentation by the Project Coordinator, Alastair Dunning: http://prezi.com/fpwcg Jup56w_/europeana-cloud/ (as of: 02/06/2014).

³¹<http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/research/15cBooktrade/> (as of: 02/06/2014).

³²Leaflet CERL at a glance: assessing the record of European's book heritage / CERL, August 2013.

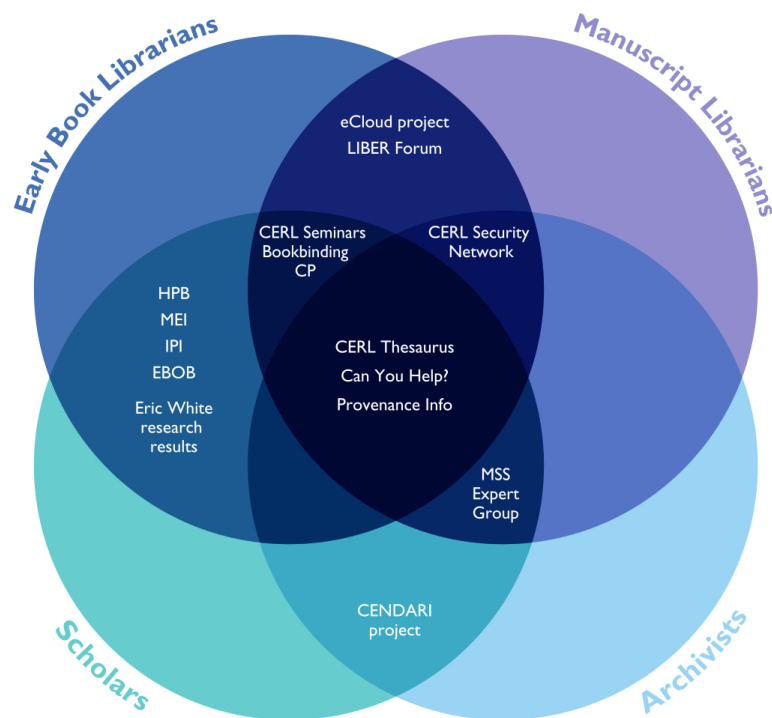


Figure 4: CERL's activities and services, and their users

4 CERL in the European library landscape

Through its individual members, CERL forms a platform for libraries, to stimulate the development of services and tools, the development and implementation of standards to support interoperability, and to act as a point of focus for all librarians, researchers and data providers working with the European book heritage. CERL considers it its responsibility to work with its member libraries to meet requirements of their future users. The mission of CERL can be summarized as:

- supporting the study of the book heritage of Europe by developing services that support integrated access to high-quality data;
- developing and maintaining a suite of sophisticated tools appropriate for the study of printed and written heritage materials of Europe

by pooling resources and expertise; contributing to joint initiatives for the development of the digital infrastructure for the humanities, including the development and implementation of standards, especially those that facilitate interoperability.³³

Opportunities for cross-fertilisation in CERL are manifold: between researchers and librarians, between experts in manuscripts and those working with early printed materials, for those developing technical tools and those wishing to use them, between those developing standards for recording provenance in various nations and for a variety of purposes. The position of CERL in the international landscape has been strengthened by the integration, in 2013, of the former LIBER Security Network and the former LIBER Manuscripts Expert Group, in its organisational structure. CERL's continued collaboration with LIBER, most notably in the aforementioned Forum for Digital Cultural

³³<http://www.cerl.org/about/development> (as of: 02/06/2014). (About CERL's Strategic Plan 2012-2015).

Heritage, and in a variety of EU-funded projects, places our work relating to our libraries' physical collections in the wider context of digitisation, cross-sector platforms such as Europeana, alignment with born-digital collections, the development of virtual learning environments, and the expectations of the (digital) humanist scholar.

CERL's aim remains the continuous development of its services for a better and more scholarly treatment, organisation and preservation of cultural heritage material in research libraries and archives.

We wish to increase the use and the usefulness of the CERL databases, and work towards positioning our database products as inevitable sources in their fields. Referencing CERL databases, copying from them, and linking to them saves the community money and increases homogeneity in data sources created by research institutions, libraries or projects. This makes CERL the first and foremost instance to turn to when looking for data related to the history of the book.³⁴

Ingeborg Versprille, MA, is CERL's Project Officer, based at the CERL office in The Hague, Prins Willem Alexanderhof 5, 2595 BE The Hague, Tel. +31 (0)70 314 01 96, E-Mail: i.versprille@cerl.org

Drs Marian Lefferts is the CERL Executive Manager, based at the CERL office in The Hague, Tel. +31 (0)70 314 01 35, E-Mail: Marian.Lefferts@cerl.org

Dr Cristina Dondi is the CERL Secretary and Oakeshott Senior Research Fellow, Lincoln College, Oxford, based at the CERL office in London, 40 Bowling Green Lane, EC1R 0NE London, Tel + 44 (0)20 7415 71 34, E-Mail: c.dondi@cerl.org

Follow CERL on

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/99706868239/>

Twitter – @CERL_org

LinkedIn – <https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1770657>

³⁴CERL's annual report 2013 by Marian Lefferts, Executive Manager of CERL (available on request: Marian.Lefferts@cerl.org).